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ABSTRACT

A study attempted to determine how education students and beginning teachers differ in their role conceptions (descriptive modality), values (evaluative modality), and norms (prescriptive modality) and to observe the developmental patterns of these aggregate conceptions, values, and norms. Subjects were 405 enrollees and graduates of the University of Iowa divided into ten groups on the basis of level of education (sophomore, junior, senior, and teacher), type of program (elementary or secondary), and sex. The questionnaire administered to all subjects contained 1) a 30-item Teacher Role Q Sort (TRQ) with "freeing," "guiding," and "molding" scales; 2) a 35-item Teacher Practices Questionnaire (TPQ) with "discipline," "counselor," "advice-information giver," "referrer," and "motivator" (Likert) scales; and 3) a 30-item Education Scale VII (ES) with "progressivism" and "traditionalism" (Likert) scales. The major analyses were one-way analysis of variance for level of education for each category on each of the three major instruments controlling for sex and type of program. Supplementary analyses entailed analysis by type of program and by sex. Findings suggest that the change in role perceptions for the sophomore through junior time interval is opposite in direction to the direction of change during the senior-teacher time interval and the junior-teacher time interval. (Complete findings and 15-item bibliography are included.) (JS)

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A Study of Teacher Role Perception in Education Students and Teachers

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A STUDY OF TEACHER ROLE PERCEPTION IN EDUCATION STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Objectives of Inquiry

Generally speaking, most teacher education studies have been limited to the impact of student teaching as related to either future success or more immediate changes in attitude. However, not much is known about professional development of teacher trainees over longer intervals of time. Furthermore, although much work using role concepts has been done in describing various characteristics of in-service personnel, little has been done for preservice training. The present investigation provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the development of role perceptions during the professional training of teachers and thereby potentially providing feedback for existing professional education programs.

To study the phenomenal realm through utilization of role concepts may be particularly appropriate since it represents a level of analysis which has shown to be viable for application to curriculum theory (Allen and Seaberg, 1964; Fishburn, 1962), teacher effectiveness (Sorenson et al., 1963; Bible and McComas, 1963), role conflict (Getzels and Guba, 1955; Twyman and Biddle, 1963), job satisfaction (Bidwell, 1955, 1957; Berkowitz and Berkowitz, 1960), personnel selection (Biddle, Twyman and Rankin Jr., 1962; Sarbin and Jones (1955), and career aspiration (Corwin, 1961).

Similar consideration must patently apply to teacher education programs. Unfortunately, however, a dearth of studies using this perspective has prevented us from having a clear picture as to the nature of the perceptions held by students in the professional education curriculum.

Specifically the aim of this investigation was to attempt to arrive at tentative answers to the following questions:

1. How do education students and beginning teachers differ in their role conceptions (descriptive modality), and what appears to be the developmental pattern of these aggregate conceptions?
2. How do education students and beginning teachers differ in their values (evaluative modality), and what appears to be the developmental pattern of these aggregate values?
3. How do education students and beginning teachers differ in their norms (prescriptive modality), and what appears to be the developmental pattern of these aggregate norms?

General Procedure

Four hundred and five subjects enrolled at, or graduates of, the University of Iowa were divided into three categories (Category I, II, and III), and subsequently into ten groups on the bases of level of education, type of program, and sex. Category I consisted of female sophomores, juniors, seniors, and teachers in elementary education; Category II consisted of female juniors, seniors, and teachers in secondary education; and Category III consisted of male juniors, seniors, and teachers in secondary education. Questionnaires were administered by mail to teachers and seniors and in group settings to juniors and sophomores.

The general procedure consisted of administering a questionnaire to a group of The University of Iowa students in the elementary and secondary programs and to teachers who were graduates of Iowa and in their first full year of teaching. The questionnaires were administered to sophomores and juniors in group settings and by mail to seniors and graduates of the University. The mailings were necessary due to the fact that these subjects were not available in group settings at the University.

Since the investigator was interested in specifying additional criteria for given levels of formal training or experience, it was difficult to determine in which course offerings student meeting these criteria (the details are given in succeeding paragraphs) would be available. As a result more questionnaires were administered then were actually used in our analysis.

Additional criteria used to determine the final composition of the sample employed in this investigation were as follows.

First of all, only those subjects were included who explicitly indicated that they were in the elementary, secondary or M.A.T. program at the University or were presently teaching in an elementary or secondary school.

Secondly, it was decided to include only those subjects who were in the expected age category associated with a particular level of education or experience. For example, the maximum age allowed for first-year teachers was twenty-five, with lower maximums allowed for various levels of education in the University.

Thirdly, in order to maintain equal intervals between various levels of education of the subjects, only those subjects indicating that they were second semester students were used.

Fourthly, criteria were established as to the number of education courses completed for a given level of education. For example, only those sophomores in elementary education were chosen who had completed no courses in professional education.

Last of all, only those seniors in elementary and secondary education were chosen who had completed their professional semester.

The imposing of these criteria in addition to the general specifications indicated earlier resulted in the formation of ten subgroups based on (1) type of program, (2) sex, (3) level of education. This is illustrated by the following outline.

ELEMENTARY TRACK

Category I (N=228)

Group I: Female Sophomores (N=50)

Group II: Female Juniors (N=58)

Group III: Female Seniors (N=57)

Group IV: Female Teachers (N=63)

SECONDARY TRACK

Category II (N=109)

Group V: Female Juniors (N=40)

Group VI: Female Seniors (N=36)

Group VII: Female Teachers (N=33)

Category III (N=68)

Group VIII: Male Juniors (N=25)

Group IX: Male Seniors (N=16)

Group X: Male Teachers (N=27)

Method

The role of the teacher encompasses two areas of research. If we are concerned with teacher behavior, we are dealing with role performance; on the other hand, if we are interested in teacher role conceptions, we are referring to the inference made from phenomenal reports. It is the latter with which we are here concerned. Biddle, Fraser, and Jellison (1968) suggest that the relationship between these two domains is complex. Citing both theoretical and empirical support they suggest:

> In part the behavior of the teacher must respond to the environmental pressures, to situations in which the teacher is involved and to the demands placed on the teachers by others. In part, however, the teacher's behavior must also be caused by internal processes, by motives, attitudes, needs, and role conceptions held by the teacher. [p. 300]

A concept very germane to role theory is the transistor which is nothing more than a referencing statement. All transitive acts have distinguishing

references. Thus, they may reference behavior, "Don't walk on the street"; they may reference person, "I like John"; or they may reference person-behavior, "Teachers should discipline their pupils."

In addition, role transistors can have several modalities. In this study we are interested in only three of them: the descriptive modality that represents an "event" or "idea"; the evaluative modality implying a "preference" or "affect"; and the prescriptive modality implying "ought to" or "should".

Now, if we apply the three modalities to covert behavior, we derive conceptions (descriptive), values (evaluative), and norms (prescriptive). Thus the questionnaire contained (1) a thirty-item Teacher Role Q Sort (TRQ), with "freeing," "guiding," and "molding" scales, (2) a thirty-six item Teacher Practices Questionnaire (TPQ), with "discipline," "counselor," "advice-information giver," "referrer," and "motivator" (Likert) scales, and (3) a thirty-item Education Scale VII (ES), with "progressivism" and "traditionalism" (Likert) scales. Scores on TRQ were used to study the descriptive modality; those on TPQ, the evaluative modality; and those on ES, the prescriptive modality.

The TRQ is a thirty-item Q sort modified from Cummins (1960). It proports to assess the theoretical orientation of teacher candidates. The sort contains, first, three items which explicitly state a generalized purpose associated with the role of the teacher. These three items form a continuum ranging from "freeing" through "guiding" to "molding." In addition, there are twenty-seven other items, theoretically forming three groups of nine behaviors each, which intuitively seem to have a specific relationship to the three generalized purpose items, forming three scales of ten items each.

Modification of the Q sort took the form of slight alteration of the wording of a few items as well as a change in the instructions. Cummins asked

his subjects to sort the statements on a "most characteristic" to "least characteristic" continuum (descriptive modality). In its present form subjects were asked to sort the statements on a continuum of the degree of importance (a variant of the descriptive modality). A value of nine was assigned to the column labeled "of most importance," a value of five to the column "of medium importance," and a value of one to the column labeled "of least importance." Scores for each subject on each of the three orientations were obtained by summing the values associated with the items of a particular scale.

The TPQ is a modifed form of that developed by Sorenson et al., (1963). In its modified form as used in this study, TRQ consists of nine problem situations each followed by four alternative solutions, each alternative theoretically representing one of six teacher role dimensions: disciplinarian, information giver, motivator, referrer, advisor and counselor: Students were asked to respond to the alternative solutions on a five point "very appropriate"--"very inappropriate" continuum (assigned values of five thru one). In scoring the solutions the keys[1] developed by Sorenson et al. (1963) were used.

Due to our selection of only nine problems, thirty-six solutions were available for assignment to the five role dimensions. The use of the keys resulted in nine solutions being scored for disciplinarian, eight for counselor, two for advice-information giver, three for referrer, and four for motivator. Each subject received a score on these five role dimensions (scales) by summing the scores for relevant solutions.

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[1]A set of five keys for the five dimensions (advisor and information giver collapsed) with virtually no item on a key unless its loading was at least .40.

The ES was developed by Kerlinger (1967) to measure attitudes toward education. The ES is a thirty item seven-point summated-rating (Likert) scale with fifteen A (Progressivism) items and fifteen B (Traditionalism) items. Responses are made on an "agree"--"disagree" continuum, reflecting responses in the prescriptive modality (norms).

The major analyses were one-way analysis of variance for level of education for each category on each of the three major instruments: Teacher Role Q Sort (TRQ), Teacher Practices Questionnaire (TPQ), and Education Scale VII (ES) controlling for sex and type of program. This entailed analysis of (1) Category I: female elementary subjects, (2) Category II: female secondary subjects, and (3) Category III: male secondary subjects, on TRQ, TPQ, and ES. Criterion measures were available for "freeing," "guiding," and "molding" scales of TRQ; for "discipline," "counselor," "advice-information giver," "referrer," and "motivator" scales of TPQ; and "traditionalism" and "progressivism" scales of ES. F-ratios were deemed significant for $p < .05$, and were calculated for all scales within categories, with subsequent two-tailed t-tests ($p < .10$) if ratios were significant.

The supplementary analyses entailed (1) analysis by type of program for Category I and II, controlling for level of education, and sex, and (2) analysis by sex for Category II and III, controlling for type of program and level of education, with subsequent Scheffe tests ($p < .05$) if F-ratios were significant ($p < .05$).

Findings

TRQ

Analysis of variance results for Categories I, II, and III found only Category I significant (freeing, $p < .05$; guiding, $p < .05$; molding, $p < .05$). However, it was evident that the highest mean score for all groups was on the "guiding" scale, with "molding" lowest.

TPQ

Category I analysis indicated significant F-ratios for "disciplinarian" ($p < .01$), "counselor" ($p < .01$), "referrer" ($p < .05$), and "motivator" ($p < .01$). Category II analysis indicated a significant F-ratio for "motivator" ($p < .05$) and Category III analysis showed a significant F-ratio for "advice-information giver" ($p < .05$).

ES

Category I analysis indicated significant F-ratios on progressivism ($p < .01$) and traditionalism ($p < .001$). Category II and III analyses indicated no significant F-ratios. However, all groups indicated on ES that their general attitudinal framework considered the referents of "progressivism" (child needs, individual differences, and social learning) more criterial than the referents of "traditionalism" (discipline, subject matter, and morality).

Supplementary Analysis

Analysis for level of education by type of program (Categories I and II), revealed significant F-ratios for level of education on "discipline" ($p < .05$), "counselor" ($p < .01$), "referrer" ($p < .05$), "motivator" ($p < .001$) and "traditionalism" ($p < .01$) scales. Subsequent Scheffé tests ($p < .05$) indicated that all significant contrasts were either between seniors and teachers and/or juniors and teachers.

Analysis for level of education by sex (Categories II and III), revealed significant F-ratios for sex on "discipline," "referrer," and "motivator" (all $p < .05$), where secondary males attached more appropriateness to the roles of "discipline," and "referrer," and less to that of "motivator" than secondary females.

Summary and Discussion

In summary, the main analyses suggest that the change in role perceptions (Category I) for the sophomore through junior time interval is opposite in direction to the direction of change during the senior-teacher time interval and the junior-teacher time interval. This is particularly true for the "freeing," "molding," "motivator," "discipline," and "traditionalism" scales. There was a similar reversal on the "advice-information" scale in Category III. Similar effects are strongly suggested on other scales in Categories II and III. (c.f. attached Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4)

It would appear that the growth process by which students (particularly Category I) become aware of selected aspects of the teachers' role and make this awareness part of their own perceptions of teacher behavior, is generally not monotonic. This seems to be true no matter which role modality is in question. The reversal effects may be attributed to the combined effects of position of subjects in a social system, and change in the frame of reference in which teacher role is being judged. Perhaps it is in order to consider greater exchange of roles between the academicians in teacher training and the practitioners. Should, for example, every education professor be required to teach in elementary or secondary school for a certain interval every year? At the very least it might suggest that laboratory schools, if properly used, can greatly help prevent increased role divergencies between academicians and practitioners.

The level of education by program results generally suggest that the largest magnitude of change is between under-graduates and teachers. Several writers (Twyman and Biddle, 1963; Getzels and Guba, 1955) have expressed concern over the role conflict facing the novice as he enters school as a teacher, and the possible effects it has on morale and dropout rates during the first

year of teaching. If these discrepancies in perceptions are real, it would suggest that the teacher training programs ought to consider seriously whether sufficient reality-oriented experiences are being provided early enough in the program in order to facilitate a more gradual approximation to the practitioners frame of reference.

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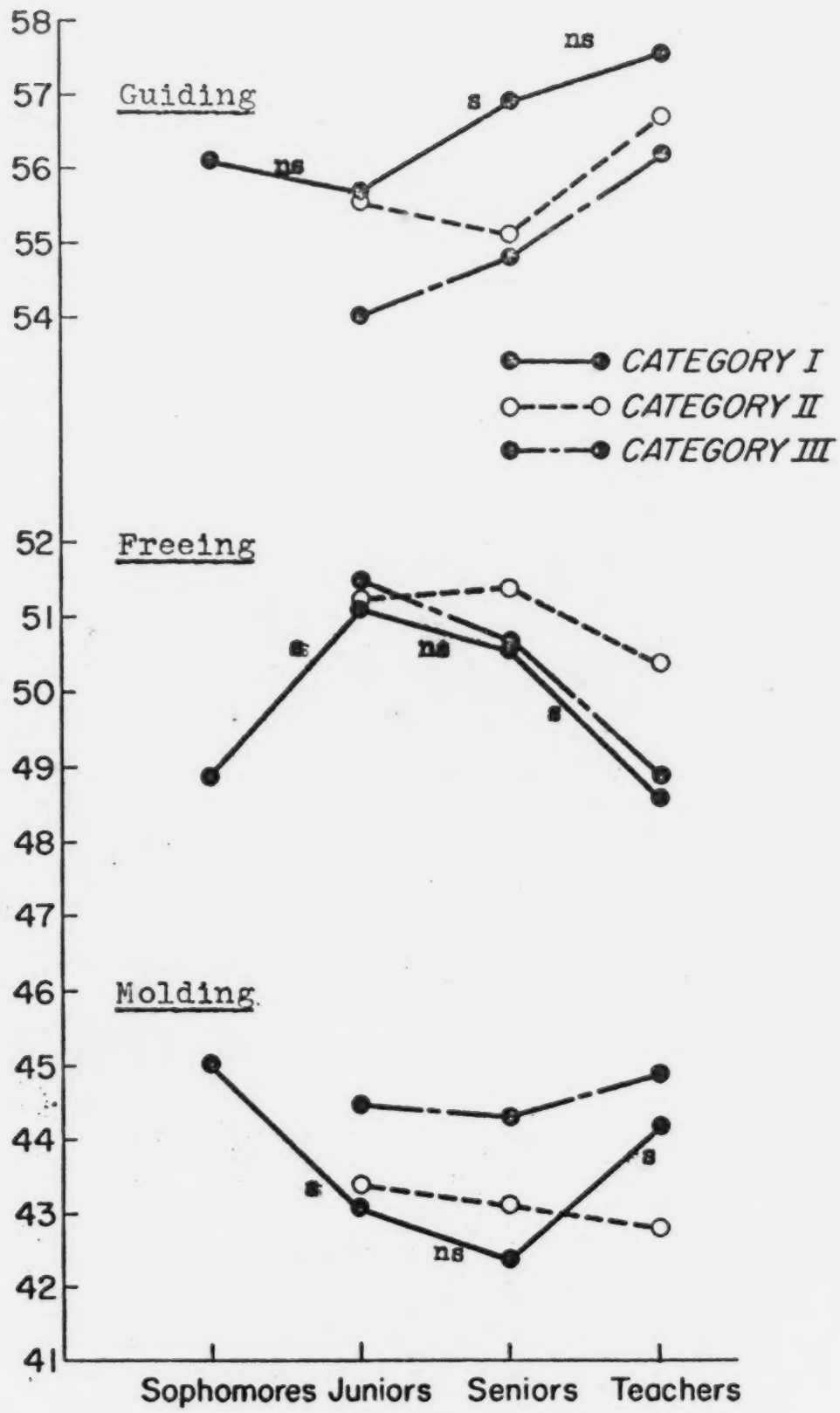

Figure 1: Mean Scores on Guiding, Freeing, and Molding Scales (TRQ)

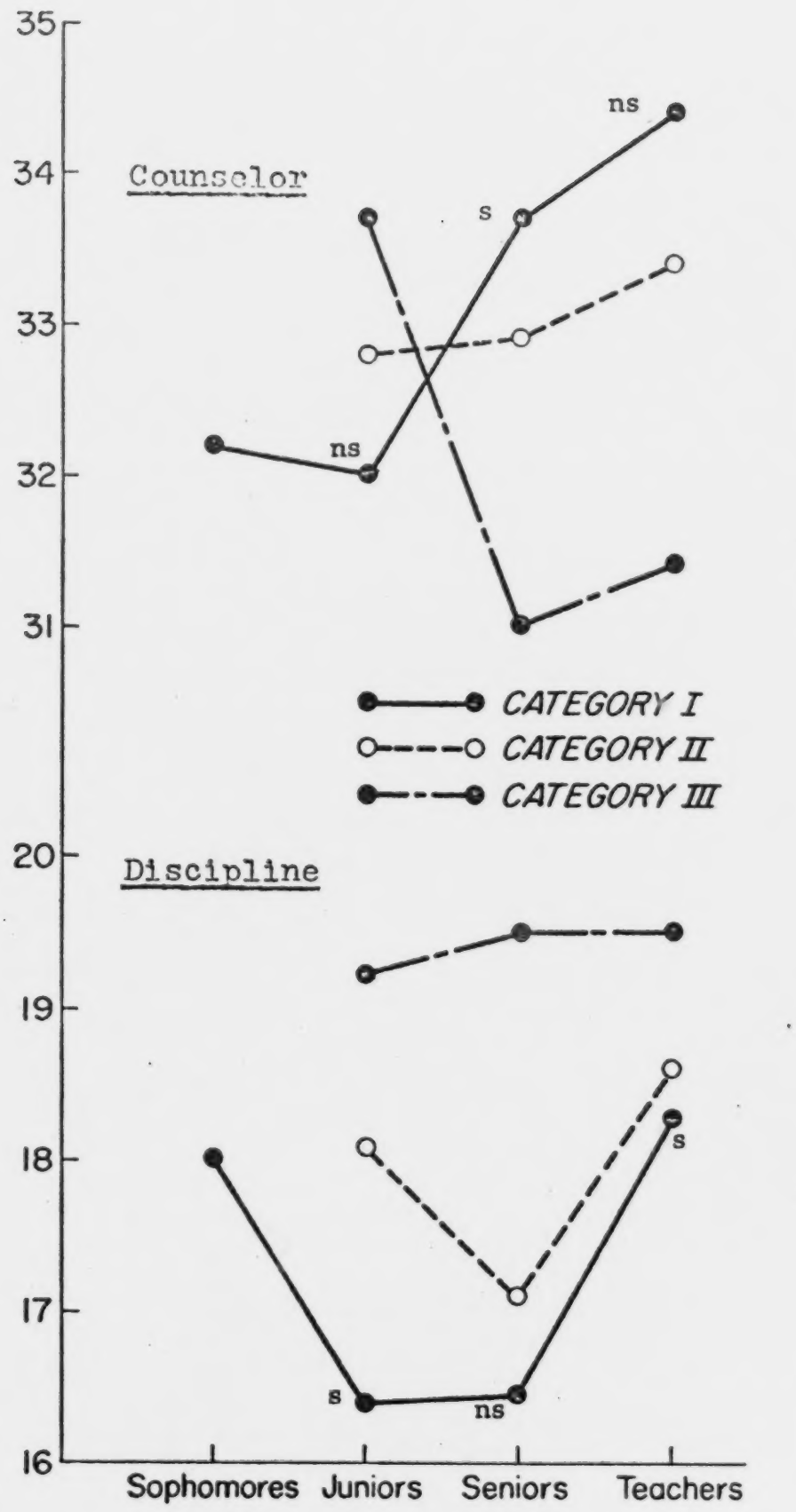

Figure 2: Mean Scores on Counselor and Discipline Scales (TPQ)

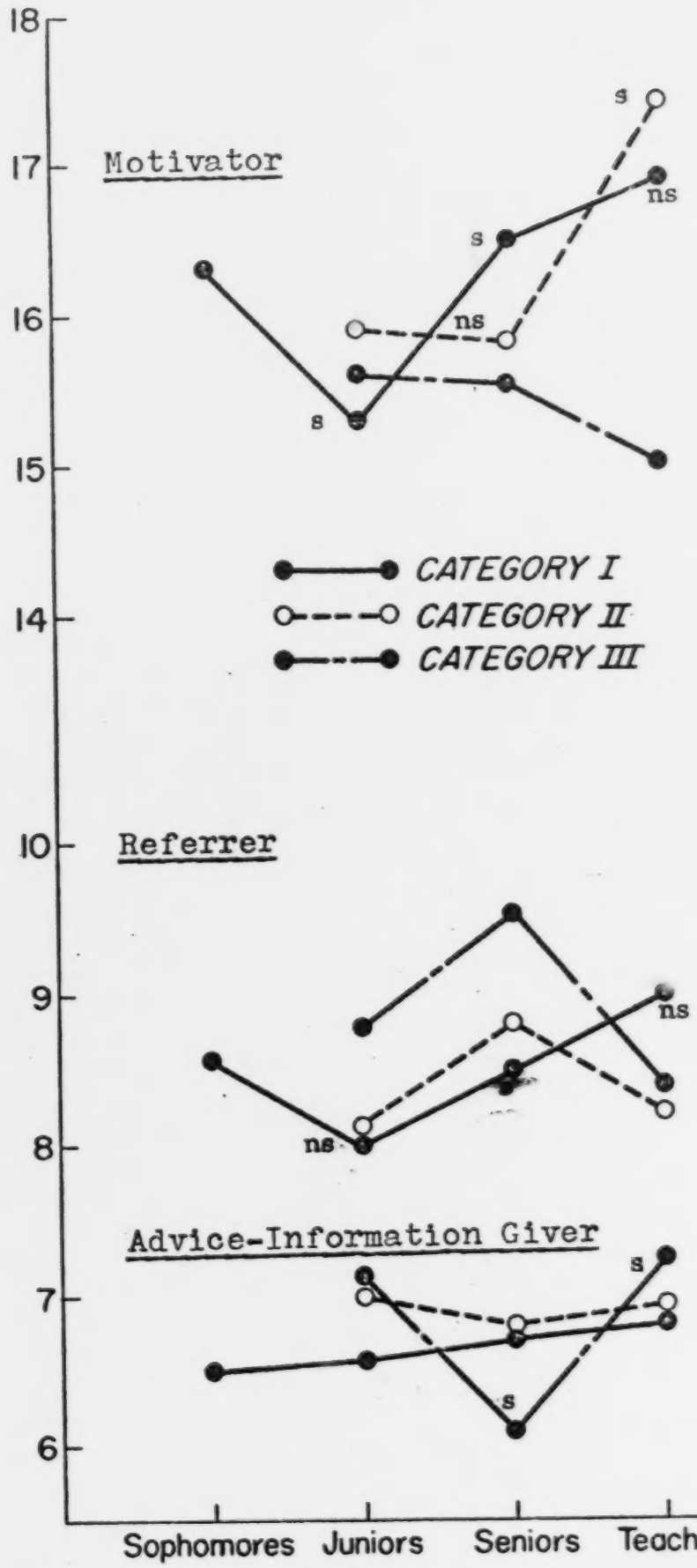

Figure 3: Mean Scores on Motivator, Referrer, and Advice-Information Giver Scales (TPQ)

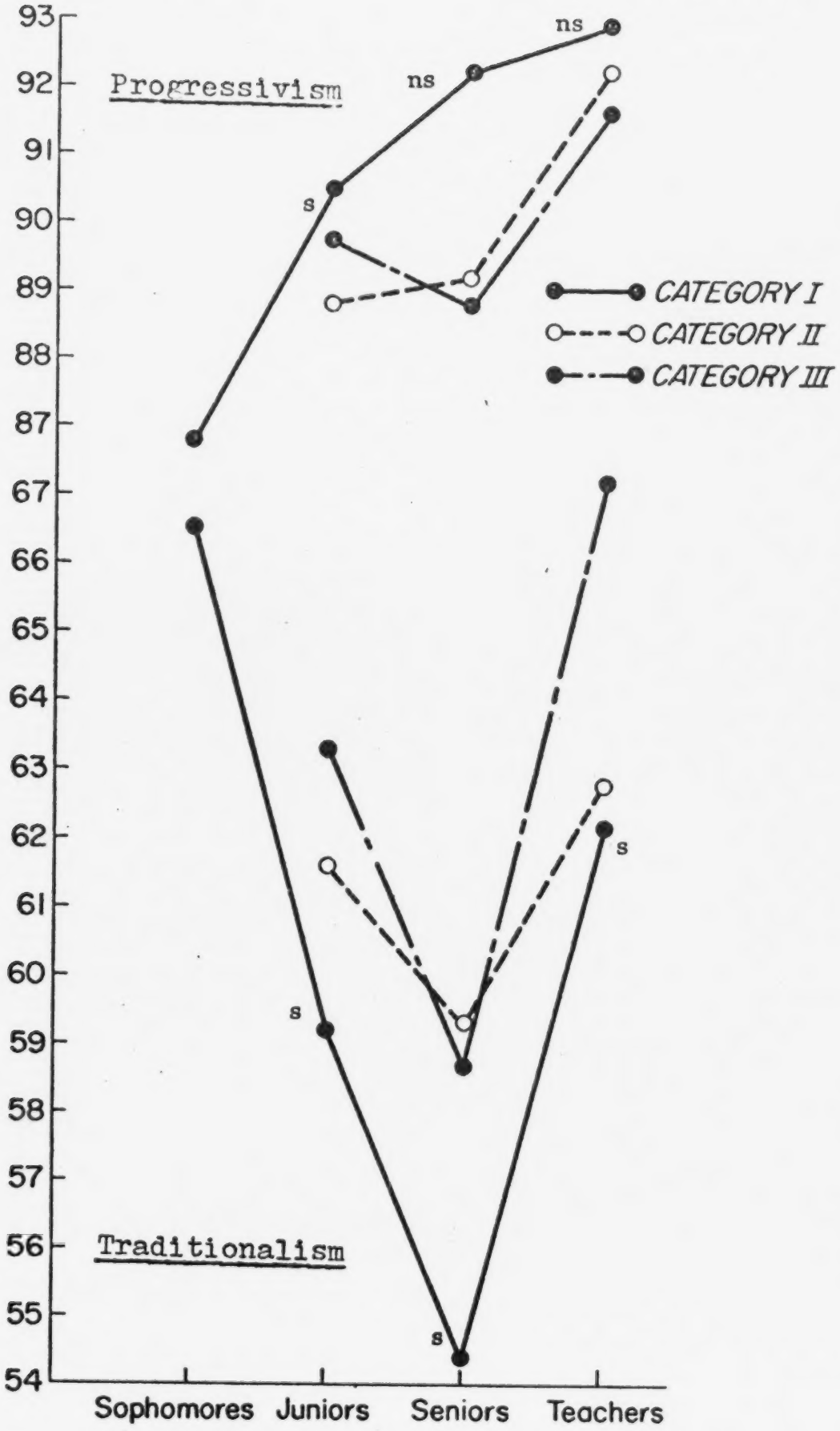

Figure 4: Mean Scores on Progressivism and Traditionalism Scales (ES)